

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

LAURA RODRIGUEZ-MORENO,

Defendant.

Case No. CR20-136 JCC

DETENTION ORDER

Offenses charged:

Count 1: Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances in violation of 21 U.S.C. §
841(b)(1)(A)

Count 3: Distribution of Methamphetamine and Heroin in violation of 21 U.S.C. §
841(b)(1)(A)

Count 4: Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute 21 U.S.C. §
841(b)(1)(A)

Count 5: Distribution of Fentanyl in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(B)

Count 6: Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute in violation of 21
U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(A)

1 Date of Detention Hearing: The Court held a detention hearing via WebEx on September 9, 2020
2 due to the exigent circumstances as outlined in General Order 13-20. Defendant consented to
3 appear telephonically due to current conditions of confinement in quarantine at the Federal
4 Detention Center. This detention order is without prejudice to renewing once the court has
5 reconstituted in-person hearings.

6 The Court, having conducted a detention hearing pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(f), and
7 based upon the reasons for detention hereafter set forth, finds:

8 FINDINGS OF FACT AND STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DETENTION

- 9 1. There is a rebuttable presumption of detention pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(e).
- 10 2. The Court finds Defendant has overcome the presumption that no condition or
11 combination of conditions will reasonably assure her appearance as required and
12 the safety of the community, however, for the reasons discussed below, the Court
13 finds detention is warranted.
- 14 3. The nature and circumstances of the charged offenses weigh heavily in favor of
15 detention. The government alleges Defendant was the leader of a conspiracy that
16 distributed large volumes of controlled substances, including particularly
17 dangerous controlled substances such as fentanyl. The government also alleges the
18 conspiracy was sophisticated and demonstrated a network of drug distribution.
19 Defendant is alleged to have personally transported controlled substances from
20 Mexico to the United States numerous times, in amounts as large as eighty pounds
21 per trip, to distribute as part of the conspiracy. The government further alleges
22 Defendant involved her husband and 18-year old son, and utilized the family's
23 restaurant, to further the conspiracy.

- 1 4. The weight of the evidence is the least important factor to consider in determining
2 detention, however, the weight of evidence against Defendant is strong in this
3 matter and weighs in favor of detention. The charges against Defendant arise from
4 a nearly two-year long investigation conducted by multiple law enforcement
5 agencies that resulted in indictments and complaints regarding two alleged
6 separate, but overlapping, drug conspiracies. The investigation included the use of
7 physical surveillance, video surveillance, Title III wire intercepts, and numerous
8 controlled buys. The government alleges the wire intercepts and surveillance show
9 Defendant stated that she worked for herself in the alleged conspiracy, and that she
10 directed and participated in the distribution of controlled substances.
- 11 5. The history and characteristics of Defendant also weigh heavily in favor of
12 detention. Defendant was born in Mexico, has family ties to Mexico, and possesses
13 a Mexican passport. Although Defendant has ties to this district through her
14 husband and children, Defendant is allegedly responsible for involving her husband
15 and eldest son in the conspiracy, as discussed above, and both are also indicted in
16 this matter. The government specifically alleges Defendant regularly utilized her
17 son as a “runner” for the conspiracy and that she continued to distribute controlled
18 substances and lead the conspiracy even after her son’s drug trafficking-related
19 arrest. Further, Defendant no longer has employment as she allegedly used the
20 restaurant owned by her and her husband to distribute controlled substances.
- 21 6. The nature and seriousness of danger to the community also weighs in favor of
22 detention. Although Defendant has no criminal history, the amount of controlled
23 substances the government alleges Defendant possessed and distributed is

1 significant. Further, two firearms and more than \$20,000 were seized from
2 Defendant's residence after her arrest.

- 3 7. Taken as a whole, the record shows Defendant poses a risk of nonappearance due
4 to her ties to Mexico and the length of her potential sentence if convicted of the
5 charged offenses. Defendant also poses a risk of danger due to the nature and
6 circumstances of the charged offenses and Defendant's characteristics with regard
7 to the alleged conspiracy, including her alleged leadership role and the use of her
8 family to further the conspiracy. Based on these findings, and for the reasons stated
9 on the record, there does not appear to be any condition or combination of
10 conditions that will reasonably assure Defendant's appearance at future court
11 hearings while addressing the danger to other persons or the community.

12 IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

- 13 (1) Defendant shall be detained pending trial, and committed to the custody of the
14 Attorney General for confinement in a correction facility separate, to the extent
15 practicable, from persons awaiting or serving sentences or being held in custody
16 pending appeal;
- 17 (2) Defendant shall be afforded reasonable opportunity for private consultation with
18 counsel;
- 19 (3) On order of a court of the United States or on request of an attorney for the
20 government, the person in charge of the corrections facility in which Defendant is
21 confined shall deliver the defendant to a United States Marshal for the purpose of
22 an appearance in connection with a court proceeding; and
- 23 (4) The Clerk shall direct copies of this Order to counsel for the United States, to

1 counsel for the Defendant, to the United States Marshal, and to the United States
2 Pretrial Services Officer.

3 Dated this 10th day of September, 2020.

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5 MICHELLE L. PETERSON
6 United States Magistrate Judge
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